

Message Text

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54

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 USIA-12 SCS-03 AID-20

CCO-00 FBO-01 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NIC-01 NSC-10

M-03 OC-06 OPR-02 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SCA-01 A-01

OMB-01 SS-14 SY-07 NEA-10 RSR-01 /141 W

----- 066642

R 301658 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7636

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMEMBASSY FREETOWN

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E. O. 11652 : N/ A

TAGS: PINS PFOR LI

SUBJECT: COUP PLOT: ATMOSPHERICS

1. TUESDAY, 27 MARCH, LIBERIAN AGE (TRUE WHIG PARTY) FRONT-PAGED SHORT ARTICLE MERELY STATING PRINCE BROWNE AND TWO UNKOWN ARMY OFFICERS HAD BEEN ARRESTED FOR QTE ALLEGEDLY ENGAGING IN SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES AIMED AT OVERTHROWING GOVERMENT UNQTE. ARTICLE ALSO NOTED JUSTICE MINISTER SIMPSON WOULD ISSUE A FROMAL STATEMENT. NEXT DAY LIBERIAN STAR (INDEPENDENT) IN LONGER ARTICLE SPECULATED RATHER WIDELY, REPORTED VARIOUS RUMORS CIRCULATING, NOTED NEITHER MINJUSTICE SIMPSON NOR MINDEFENSE WILLIAMS WOULD COMMENT.

ARTICLE TOOK MILD SLAP AT MINJUSTICE AND CONCLUDED QTE YESTERDAY STAR MADE NUMBER OF ATTEMPTS TO GET SOME FACTS BUT ALL PROVED FUTILE. AND SO OUR GUESS IS AS GOOD AS ANYBODY' S ON THE MATTER UNQTE. WE UNDERSTAND SENIOR OFFICIALS OF STAR WERE CALLED TO EXECUTIVE MANSION SAME DAY AND THOROUGHLY DRESSED DOWN BY PRESIDENTAND LATER BY SIMPSON.

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2. WEDNESDAY NIGHT, MARCH 28, SIMPSON APPEARED ON LIBERIAN TV IN ADDRESS TO NATION. HIS SPEECH WAS LARGELY DEVOID OF INFORMATION AND CONFINED ITSELF LARGELY TO READINGS FROM CONSTITUTION AND EXHORTATIONS TO ARMY AND CITIZENRY TO REMAIN CALM AND TO REFLECT ON LIBERIA' S 125 YEARS OF STABLE GOVERNMENT. SIMPSON DID CATEGORICALLY STATE NAMES OF THOSE ARRESTED-- ASSISTANT MINISTER BROWNE, LT. COL. KPARDEH AND LT. COL. SAYDEE-- AND SAID THEY WERE IN DETENTION IN STOCKADE IN BARCLAY TRAINING CENTER. MONROVIA.

3. REACTION OF LIBERIANS APPEARS BE ONE OF SURPRISE AND UNCERTAINTY. SOME INDIVIDUALS ARE A BIT EDGY SINCE ACTIVITIES SUCH AS THESE ARE CERTAINLY NOT IN LIBERIAN TRADITION. MOST SOURCES HERE FIND IT HARD TO BELIEVE COUP PLOTTERS WERE REALLY SERIOUS ALTHOUGH SOME HAVE EXPRESSED CONSIDERABLE ANXIETY OVER IMPLICATIONS OF SITUATION.

4. TO DATE GOL HAS NOT ISSUED ANY MEANINGFUL STATEMENT ON SITUATION. ALL WITH WHOM WE HAVE TALKED ARE QUITE CRITICAL OF GOVERNMENT INFORMATION POLICY OR MORE REALISTICALLY LACK OF INFORMATION POLICY. PEOPLE BELIEVE EXECUTIVE/ MANSION AND OR MINISTRY OF INFORMATION HAVE BEEN BADLY REMISS IN NOT PUTTING OUT OFFICIAL STATEMENT. UNTIL SUCH STATEMENT IS ISSUED RUMORS FREQUENTLY ABSURD, WILL EBB AND FLOW THROUGHOUT CITY. MANFULL

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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